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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE

LIVING CONDITIONS IN CUBA, 1953

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Havana

Population of country: Cuba: 5,870,904; Greater Havana: 1,211,648;
Americans in Havana: approximately 2,000.

Climate: Temperature ranges from 60°F in Winter to 100°F in Summer; rainfall 80 in; rainy season May through October; humidity varies from 40% to 96%.

Type of Clothing: Light summer clothing may be worn comfortably the year around, it seldom being cool enough for wool clothing. Winter evenings a light wrap or sweater for women, and a man's suit coat usually suffice. A good supply of sport clothes is advisable. Replacement of articles may be made locally at increased cost for importations. Formal clothes are needed for special occasions.

Housing: Apartments are easier to obtain than houses though with perseverance a suitable house can be found. No Government quarters are available. Furnished houses are usually skimpily furnished making it preferable to bring furniture including refrigerator, electric stove and other electric appliances.

Radio: There are 4 television channels in Havana and television sets and radios should be brought along. No adjustments are needed in new Havana but care should be exercised in plugging into sockets in old Havana. Some new arrivals have burned out record players and other appliances before ascertaining voltage of line.

Electricity: AC, 110 new Havana, 220 old Havana, 60 cycle.

Schools: Cost per classes at the Ruston Academy, considered one of the best schools in Havana are as follows:

Registration fee, all classes	\$ 5.00
Pre-Primary (Kindergarten)	16.00 Per Month
First Grade through 6th Grade	28.00 " "
7th Grade through 1st year High School	35.00 " "
2nd year High School through 4th year High School	40.00 " "

Special courses such as commercial are also taught.

Prices quoted may vary.

Sports: Golf, swimming, fishing, hunting, boating, tennis. There are several made beaches in Havana, with beautiful natural beaches within one to three hours drive. Most Havana beaches belong to clubs some of which are very exclusive and almost impossible to join. There are some public beaches.

Entertainment: Clubs, movies, Little Theater, concerts Lyceum, circus, etc. Mother's Club. Playgrounds for English-speaking children.

Availability of Foods: A wide range of foods are available including good cuts of meat. There is an abundance of tropical fruits, oranges, grapefruit, pineapple, avocado, bananas, etc. Stateside fruits are on the market in season, apples, peaches, pears, grapes, etc. at higher prices. Canned goods, baby foods, dog foods, etc. are available at wholesale prices when purchased in case lots.

Medicine and Hospitals: U. S. pharmaceuticals are available in local drug stores at increased prices. The British-American Hospital is staffed by Cuban doctors. There is a hospital plan whereby, members get treatment and hospitalization at a reduced rate. All class of dental work is available. There are no American doctors or dentists practicing in Havana. There are local optometrists and General Practitioners.

Automobile: Desirable, especially since it is easy to bring over by driving to Miami and shipping via P&O to Havana. Can be shipped like baggage on ticket at reduced rate. Should be delivered to pier several hours before sailing time. Parts and services are available for popular makes.

Communications: Telephones are difficult to get unless already in house or apartment when rented. Air mail is two to three days from Washington and New York, one day from Miami. Freight service from Miami, New Orleans and New York is good. Most of the city of Havana is covered by bus lines operating on frequent schedules. Taxis are plentiful but rates are high.

Sanitary Conditions: The safest rule is to boil all water and milk before drinking. Water and sewer lines across permitting contamination, although, work is going on to remedy this situation. Also caution should be exercised in eating raw vegetables since even though properly handled in growing and marketing, they may be contaminated by impure water from the tap.

General: Some unfurnished houses are provided with gas stoves. Electric stoves are more expensive to operate but there is never a shortage of electricity and some houses are equipped with electric stoves. When one is already owned it is advisable to bring it. One thing to remember in looking for a house or apartment is to be sure there is an adequate supply of water. Some locations are without water parts of the day.

